Klezmer Program March 26, 2026 Walther Hall, Faculty of Music

University of Toronto Klezmer Ensemble
Brian Katz, Director

Klezmer, the soul music of Eastern-European Jewry, can be considered an early form of “fusion," an amalgamation of Eastern-European based folk tunes/musical dialects mixed with indigenous Jewish sounds, particularly those rooted in the Chassidic tradition. Niginum, the wordless chant melodies of the Chassidim inform many klezmer pieces, as do the “yearning” melismatic outpourings of the synagogue chazzan, cantor. When klezmer arrived in America it again took new turns, incorporating aspects of American popular song as well as jazz. The University of Toronto Klezmer ensemble performs both old and new world klezmer, embracing a living tradition that continues to expand. In past years, the U of T Klezmer Ensemble have performed at the Ashkenaz Festival, The Four Seasons Opera Centre, and the Glenn Gould Theatre.

Brian Katz is an internationally acclaimed guitarist, pianist, recording artist, improviser, composer, music educator, and klezmer-at-large! As a performer and composer, he is noted for bringing classical and global music influences to modern jazz and Jewish music, and is highly regarded as a “free” improviser, where he blends many of his influences into coherent musical statements. Brian has just recorded several tracks for a compilation recording featuring Canadian Jewish composers and performers. Of his last solo recording, *Leaves Will Speak*, Jazz Podium (Germany) wrote:“If you want music that speaks—here it is.” www.briankatz.com for more about Brian.

List of Performers:

Nil Basdurak (TA), voice
Farimah Khorrami, clarinet
Cace Mercer, bass
Sophie Reimer-Epp, violin

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All arrangements by the U of T Klezmer Ensemble

Abe Schwartz Bulgar Abe Schwartz (1881-1963)

Mazltov #72 Trad. Collected by Moshe Beregovski (1892-1961)

Galitzianer Tantz ("Dance from Galicia") Shloimke Beckerman (1884-1974)

Chassidic Waltz/Flatbush Waltz Trad/Andy Statman (b.1950)

Üsküdar'a Gider İken (While Going to Üsküdar)/Terk in Amerika Trad/Naftule Brandwein

Nisht Gezorgt (Don't Worry) Trad. made famous by Dave Tarras (1895-1989)

Gankino Horo (Ganka's Dance) Trad Bulgarian

Der Gasn Nign (Street Tune) Trad

Freylekh's # 1&3 (Joyous, up-beat tunes) Trad